

Universities and Business Cooperation Contest Results

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The results of the second round of the Universities and Business Cooperation Contests have been announced. Deputy Minister of Education and Science Sergey Mazurenko discussed the successes and difficulties related to state support based on Government Resolutions №218 and 21 at a briefing on October 6, 2010.

The government has suggested providing two types of subsidies as a means of state support – one implementing cooperation between universities and business (Resolution 218, with 19 billion rubles), and the other dedicated to creating university-based innovation infrastructure (Resolution 219, with 8 billion rubles). The government has made the decision to allocate this money in a single-installment payment, and the Ministry of Education and Science will receive the funding shortly. The contests have already been conducted, and the latest lists of winners can now be found on the program’s website.

In total, 199 applications for participation in the Innovative Infrastructure Contest were submitted; 197 were deemed qualified, of which 56 won. The contest score was therefore 3.5. In terms of geography, applications originated from 35 different regions. Twenty originated from the Central Federal District; 8, from Siberia; and 7, from the Privolzhsky and Northwest Districts. “We are aiming to select applications of the appropriate level,” – the deputy minister said, commenting on the regional distribution of winners.

As we predicted, the winners include 5 federal and 20 national research universities. The winners



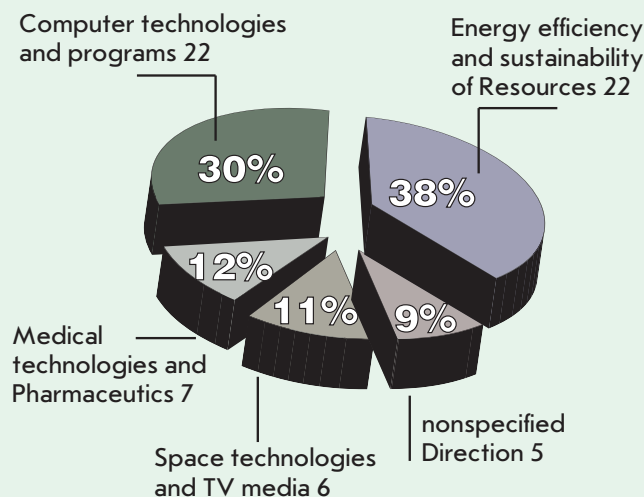
Sergey Mazurenko

will receive up to 50 million rubles a year for 3 years. The funds are meant to be used for the creation and development of Centers of Technology Transfer, as well as for the management (administration) of intellectual property, stimulation of innovations, etc.

Resolution 218 was slightly different. Applicants showed greater interest; however, only 553 of the 806 applications received were deemed eligible for the contest. One hundred and twelve applications, received from 107 companies and 76 universities, were successful. Among them are 25 research universities and 6 federal universities.

Based on the conditions of the contest, the funds allocated for research and development at uni-

Fig. 1. Distribution of winners in the first round of the Universities and Business Cooperation Contest in the priority directions of the Presidential Modernization Board.



Universities leading in cooperation and innovative infrastructure contest

| Universities | Cooperation program | Innovative infrastructure |
|---|---------------------|---------------------------|
| N.E. Bauman Moscow State Technical University | 3 | 1 |
| Moscow Physico-Technical Institute | 3 | 1 |
| National University of Science and Technology "MISIS" | 3 | 1 |
| B. N. Yeltsin Urals Federal University | 3 | 1 |
| Saint Petersburg Electrotechnical University "LETI" | 3 | 1 |
| Kazan State University | 3 | 1 |
| M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University | 3 | 1 |

versities will not be channeled directly to the university but will go through its financial partner, which then has to match the sum provided by the state and offer the university an amount of money equal to or higher than the amount offered by the state. In addition, 20% of the matching funds should be used for scientific and technological purposes.

The state's subsidies will not exceed 100 million rubles per year for a period of up to 3 years – a total of 300 million rubles. In addition, the subsidy per year should exceed 20% of the participating company's annual revenue for the last three years. Perhaps, this explains why the actual average of the subsidy for the entire period of the contract amounts to only 70 million roubles, which is less than a quarter of the highest amount possible. According to Sergey Mazurenko, "30 million is enough for a good project to be carried out." Yet, participants who asked for 3-5 million were excluded from the competition. Nevertheless, the amount of off-budget funds exceeded 20 billion rubles because of major contestants (participants). Based on the results of the past two selection rounds, the government will invest 18 billion rubles.

The head of the Department of Strategy and Development

(a branch of the Ministry of Education and Science) Igor Remorenko let it be known that the winners will be carefully monitored. Currently, a computer-based system through which business and universities will be held accountable on co-operation once a month is being developed. Having realized that expenditures will be strictly monitored, two companies have already withdrawn their winning applications.



Igor Remorenko

While commenting on the broad and far-reaching changes in the system of Russian science funding, Sergey Mazurenko gave journalists the following advice:

"We have to inform the public correctly. Very often, conversations arise about the underfunding of a scientific sector. Now, we are discussing the heightened attention that the state is devoting to science. However, the landscape of Russian science includes several areas. When I was a student at the Physico-Technical Institute, Kapitza used to tell us: there is fundamental and applied research, but there is one science. Scientific research is carried out in various organizations. However, we cannot make do without fundamental science either. Now fundamental research is strikingly different from Newtonian experiments, and it requires powerful tools and setups. Even the most developed countries cannot cope alone with the task of creating these setups. We actively participate in such projects as LHC, IER, and the free electron-based laser project. All this confirms serious focus on fundamental science. In addition, one of the tasks is to develop a large setup in Russia; so the PIK in Gatchina is nearly completed. But now we are talking about applied science." ●